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# AUSTRIAN INFORMATION

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### AUSTRIAN SKIERS TRIUMPH AT 1956 WINTER OLYMPICS.

The Winter Olympic Games for 1956 came to a close with successes for Austria's athletes, in particular for her skiers, successes which were unique in the history of Austrian sports and in the history of international winter sports. The Austrian participants in these games won a total of 4 gold, 3 silver and 4 bronze medals. On the basis of the unofficial scoring system for the nations participating, the Austrians took second place, behind the Soviet Union and ahead of all of the teams from the northern and Alpine countries of Europe.



*Toni Sailer, Hero of the Winter Olympics, 1956*

The success of the 21-year-old Toni Sailer was unparalleled in the history of skiing, this young Austrian having been the first to win all three Alpine competitions — downhill skiing, slalom and giant slalom — thereby adding a fourth title, that of World Champion for 1956, to his other three world championship titles. The fourth gold medal went to Elisabeth (Sissy) Schwarz and Kurt Oppelt for pair figure skating. Silver medals were won by Regina Schoepf (slalom), Putzi Frandl (giant slalom) and Anderl Molterer (giant slalom). Bronze medals were awarded to the following Austrian athletes: Ingrid Wendl (figure skating for women), Thea Hochleitner (giant slalom), Walter Schuster (giant slalom) and Anderl Molterer (downhill skiing).

A total of seven national teams came to Cortina with Austrian trainers to participate in the skiing contests of the 1956 Winter Olympics.

**SHARP AUSTRIAN PROTEST TO HUNGARY.** On January 27, Dr. Karl Braunias, Austrian Envoy in Budapest, transmitted a note to Deputy Foreign Minister Karpatis of the Hungarian People's Republic containing a strong protest on the part of the Austrian Federal Government against the violation of Austrian sovereignty near the locality of Pamhagen (Burgenland) on January 21 by military planes flying from the direction of Hungary. The note called on the Hungarian Government to take measures designed to prevent a repetition of similar incidents. At the same time, the Aus-

*(Continued on page 2)*

### MINISTER PROKSCH ANNOUNCES SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAM.

Shortly after assuming office, Anton Proksch, the new Austrian Minister of Social Welfare, announced the most important aspects of his social welfare program for Austria. Minister Proksch indicated that he would devote all of his energies to making full employment a permanent condition and to combining all legal provisions relating to labor rights into a modern and comprehensive law. He also advocated an early solution to the problem of old-age insurance for all self-employed individuals as well as persons working in agriculture, the trades and the professions.

Herr Proksch will be granted a leave of absence from his position as Secretary General of the Austrian Trade Union Federation for the duration of his activity as Minister of Social Welfare. Among the other offices held by the new Minister is that of Vice-President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

### MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ORDERS W.F.T.U. OFFICE CLOSED.

The Ministry of the Interior has ordered the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) to discontinue its activity in Austria and to close its main headquarters in Vienna. According to the Ministry's communique, this order is based on the fact that the activity of the organization was endangering Austria's relations with other countries and with the United Nations, and that this activity complied neither with Austrian laws nor with the statutes of the W.F.T.U. itself. After the Austrian State Treaty went into effect, the W.F.T.U. had registered in Vienna as an association and was carrying on its activities under the provisions of the Austrian Law on Associations.

### 1955 PAYMENTS BALANCE CLOSES WITH 100-MILLION-DOLLAR DEBIT.

Whereas Austria's balance of payments for 1953 and 1954 closed with assets of 61 and 68 million dollars respectively, it showed a debtor balance of approximately 100 million dollars at the end of 1955. (There was a deficit of approximately 188 million dollars in the trade balance as of the end of the same year.) According to the Austrian Institute for Economic Research, approximately 60 million dollars were covered from sources not statistically reported.

Although this development is by no means a favorable one, for the time being the Austrian economy is in no danger, since the abundant foreign exchange reserve makes it possible to finance the excess of imports. A deficit as large as that for 1955 could be covered for more than three years, even if the country was dependent exclusively on the said reserve. Moreover, the present volume of imports includes

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a considerable amount of "non-essential goods." If, over a longer period, there were no change in the situation and imports were not kept in check, the balance of payments could still be improved by means of limitations on liberalization, without having to fear serious disruptions in supply or in the course of production.

It is to be hoped that a gradual expansion in exports will lead to a reduction in the excess ratio of imports, although it should not be expected that the deficit in the balance of payments would likewise automatically disappear. A decisive change in the balance of trade is hardly imminent. The same situation applies in the case of the balance in services, even though the tourist trade will in all probability continue to be an important item on the asset side. Settlement payments to the Soviet Union and payments to the Western Powers on Austria's prewar and postwar debts amounted to 7 million dollars during the third quarter of 1955, exclusive of service charges on loans. These obligations will continue to rise somewhat for the time being and will not begin to decrease until 1960.

However, as against the obligations arising out of the State Treaty and the loss of payments from the occupation powers there are increased possibilities of revenue, i.e. the proceeds from the export business of the former USIA enterprises and oil plants — to the extent that claim to them was previously laid by the occupation power — and also from increased foreign tourism in the eastern provinces. It is doubtful, however, whether these possibilities will fully compensate for the losses.

**DEFICIT IN 1955 TRADE BALANCE.** The Austrian Central Statistical Office has issued the following preliminary figures on Austrian foreign trade during the past year: (the figures in parentheses are those for 1954 — Ed.)

In 1955, Austrian imports amounted to 10,299,400 tons (8,229,900 tons), representing a value of 23,068 (16,987) million schillings. Of the foregoing figure, 55 (514) million schillings come under the heading of ERP imports. Export during the same year amounted to 5,699,000 (5,415,100) tons, or a value of 18,170 (15,851) million schillings. These figures show that the deficit in Austria's trade balance rose from 1,136 million schillings in 1954 to 4,898 million in 1955.

The central Statistical Office has released the following figures for December 1955: Imports, 930,800 (964,000) tons, in the value of 2,357 (2,192) million schillings. Export, 534,100 (480,400) tons, in the value of 1,773 (1,629) million schillings. Thus, the December deficit amounted to 584 million schillings as against 563 million in November.

#### **Protest to Hungary (Continued from page 1)**

Austrian Government reserved the right to approach the Hungarian Government on the subject of compensation for the damage caused to Austrian territory as a result of the incident.

The Hungarian Minister expressed his country's regrets to the Austrian envoy, indicating that investigation of the incident by Hungary had not yet been completed. Similarly I.I. Ilyichov, the Soviet Ambassador in Vienna, has expressed regrets to Austrian Foreign Minister Figl over the air incident in which a Soviet plane was also involved.

**96 CARTELS HAVE REGISTERED TO DATE.** Thus far, a total of 96 cartel agreements have been reported for inclusion in the Cartel Register. Of this number, 65 are already listed in the Register. Registration of 8 of the agreements was turned down and processing of another 23 is still in progress. The 65 registered cartel agreements include the following: 7 price cartels, 21 cartels regulating price and terms, 4 regulating price and distribution and 1 rationalization cartel. The remaining ones are agreements on brand products. Thirty-two of the cartels include price arrangements.

**NEW HIGH IN IRON AND STEEL PRODUCTION.** In 1955, production in the Austrian iron and steel industry set a new record. Iron ore production for the year was 2,838,000 tons, as against 2,721,000 tons for 1954 and 2,756,000 for 1953. The pig iron figure was 1,508,000 tons (1,354,000 in 1954). Raw steel production increased by 10.3% over 1954 and by as much as 42.2% over 1953. The industry concentrated heavily on the output of finished rolled products, with the result that an increase of 21.3% over 1954 was achieved. A total of 580,000 tons of sheet metal — or 20.6% more than 1954 — was processed in 1955.

As of the end of 1955, the iron and steel industry was employing nearly 50,000 persons — exclusive of the personnel of the USIA enterprises which have recently been taken over — or 2,000 more than in December 1954.

Austria's iron and steel industry is now exploiting its productive capacity to the full. It is only in the rolled goods section that there is still some reserve capacity but, due to the limitations arising out of the steel bottleneck, this capacity cannot be utilized. For this reason, the demand for rolled goods, especially commercial products, has not been fully covered and the supply situation in the iron processing industry has been correspondingly critical. Even the intensified import of rolled material did not improve the supply situation substantially, only about 5% of existing requirements having been covered by foreign shipments.

At the beginning of 1955, the industry began a program of expanding existing facilities for raw steel production. By the middle of 1956, this program is expected to result in a substantial increase in raw steel production and, consequently, in an easing of the shortage of certain types of rolled goods. The supply of scrap was critical throughout the year, so that the Austrian steel works were compelled to operate with considerably smaller deliveries of scrap than their foreign competitors.

In order to supply the steel industry with the required coke, it was necessary to import coke from America. In view of the increasing coke requirements of other countries, a serious shortage of this product must be expected during the current year.

During 1954, the supply of ferroalloys to the Austrian steel industry improved, although prices were higher. The only instance of deterioration was in the field of nickel, in which the supply situation, which was inadequate even in 1954, became worse and thus made it necessary to impose serious restrictions on the production of nickel-alloyed steel.



**COKE PRODUCTION EXPANDED.** The last of the batteries to be restored at the coke-producing plant at the United Austrian Iron and Steel Works (VOEST) in Linz has now been started up. This plant had been severely damaged during the war. The battery includes 31 furnaces and uses 800 tons of fine coal daily. Operation of the new battery means that the Linz plant will be producing an additional 650 tons of coke daily, thereby eliminating the shortage of blast-furnace coke and coke for domestic fuel.

**POWER CONSUMPTION INCREASES 12.4%.** According to an announcement by the "Verbundgesellschaft," Austria's power consumption of 9,700 million kilowatt hours in 1955 was 1,073 million KWH or 12.4%, higher than in 1954. The rate of increase was as high as that of 1954 over 1953. Power production did not maintain the same pace as consumption: compared with 1954, it rose by 9.3%, i.e. from 9,847 million to 10,766 million KWH. Since the power export figures for 1954 and 1955 were approximately equal, power imports had to be increased from 272 million to 440 million KWH, or about 62%. The "Verbundgesellschaft" expects that the rise in Austrian power consumption will continue at the same rate in 1956 as in the previous years, even assuming a less vigorous upward movement of the economic situation. The basic factor in this situation increasing change-over to electrical energy on the part of users of other forms of energy. It is therefore becoming necessary to intensify efforts in the direction of striking a balance between the increase in consumption and the construction of new power plant resources. The increase in consumption to the extent of 1,073 million KWH during 1955 corresponds approximately to the annual capacity of a power plant of the size of the Ybbs-Persenbeug unit.

**RECORD CEMENT PRODUCTION.** During the past year, 1,882,400 tons of cement were used in Austria, of which amount 1,880,000 tons were supplied by domestic plants. The amount so supplied was approximately 275,000 tons — or 17% — higher than in 1954. 25,000 tons were imported and 22,600 exported during 1955. The province of Vorarlberg, where the Luenersee power plant was under construction, accounted for the greatest proportion of Austria's domestic consumption, although Lower Austria, Styria, Upper Austria, Carinthia and Tyrol also used greater amounts than in 1954. In these provinces, too, the hydroelectric plant construction was the determining factor. Nearly 240,000 tons of cement were used for these projects in 1955.

In view of the heavy and continuing demands, the capacity of the cement plants was utilized 100%. Moreover, a rotary kiln was placed in operation in a Carinthian plant. A cement plant in Vienna and another in Tyrol will shortly initiate operation of rotary kilns with a capacity of 330 to 350 tons per day. As a result of these new facilities, approximately 130,000 to 150,000 more tons of cement will be available in 1956 than in 1955.

**SPECIAL STAMP COMMEMORATING AUSTRIAN ADMISSION TO UN.** A special stamp will be issued by the Austrian Postal Administration in honor of Austria's admission to the United Nations. The stamp shows three building stones marked with the letters U-N-O, to which two hands add a

fourth stone bearing the Austrian coat of arms. The design is intended to symbolize the entry and incorporation of Austria into the world organization. The stamp, which will have a nominal value of 2.40 schillings, will first be issued on February 16 and become valid as of February 20, 1956. Printed in a redish-brown tint, the stamp was designed by Prof. Robert Schober and engraved by Herbert T. Schimek. A total of 3 million copies will be printed by the Austrian State Printing Office.



## CULTURE AND SCIENCE

**MOZART'S CONCERT VIOLIN IS RETURNED TO SALZBURG.** In connection with the celebrations in honor of the bicentenary of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, it was recently announced that the International Mozarteum Foundation has now acquired the composer's concert violin from a private source. This means that the Salzburg Mozart Museum, which already owns the violin used by Mozart as a child, will now be able to exhibit a second violin known to have belonged to the famous composer. The concert violin in question had for many years been in the possession of Mozart's sister. Later it was owned by School Director Lenk in Schwanenstadt (Upper Austria) and in 1921 was sold to a druggist, Joseph Brander, from whom it has now been acquired. Mozart's small-sized violin, formerly owned by Count Johann Ludwig Paar, former Austrian Ambassador to Rome, was obtained by the Mozarteum in 1896.

As part of the ceremony held in Salzburg to celebrate the acquisition of the concert violin, Christa Richter-Steiner performed Mozart's violin sonata in E flat Major, K. 302.

### NEW SALZBURG FESTIVAL HOUSE TO SEAT 2,400.

The Austrian Government recently approved plans for expanding the Salzburg Festival House so that it will be able to seat an audience of 2,400 instead of the present capacity of 1,500. The new construction work will be carried out under the supervision of the Ministry of Reconstruction. The building will be the property of the Austrian State and will be rented to the Salzburg Festival Fund. The new structure is being designed by Prof. G. Holzmeister, who will also be in charge of the decor. Numerous specialists who acquired valuable experience in the reconstruction of the Vienna State Opera and the Burgtheater have been engaged as collaborators in the remodeling of the Salzburg theater. The total cost of the project is estimated at approximately 5 million dollars.

**SALZBURG TO HONOR BRUNO WALTER.** In a special session at Mirabell Castle, the Municipal Council of Salzburg voted to award the "Grand Gold Medal of the Mozart City of Salzburg" to Bruno Walter, in recognition of his outstanding work as a conductor of the Salzburg Festivals. Bruno Walter was one of the Festival's most important advisors in its inception and its early years.

**ZUCKMAYER PREMIERE AT BURGTHEATER.** Carl Zuckmayer arrived in Vienna recently to be present at the final rehearsals for the Vienna premiere of his play "Das kalte Licht" (The Cold Light) at the Burgtheater. The performance is being directed by Josef Gielen. The same theater's next novelty is a revival of Grillparzer's "The Jewess of Toledo," as staged by Ernst Lothar and featuring the reappearance of Annemarie Dueringer, after a long absence from the Burgtheater, to play the title role. Kaethe Dorsch, who is also returning after a long absence, will be seen in the premiere of Christopher Fry's "Das Dunkel ist Licht Genug" (The Dark is Light Enough) on May 1.

**NEW TAPESTRIES FOR BURGTHEATER.** The Gobelin plant in the Vienna Hofburg, which will shortly begin weaving a tapestry designed by the artist Kokoschka for the Brussels World Exhibition, has just completed another tapestry for the salon of the Burgtheater's gala loge. Entitled "The Night," this new hanging for the Burgtheater was designed by Wolfgang Hutter. Executed in various grey tones and extremely economical in detail, the tapestry truly conveys the peacefulness of night. It is probably the best Hutter design to be executed by the Gobelin studios to date. By way of contrast, the same room will feature a tapestry — as yet only in the design stage — entitled "The Day," which will be immeasurably more vivid, using brilliantly sunny and fiery colors and having almost a restless effect.

**HISTORY OF MEDICINE SOCIETY FOUNDED.** A general meeting was recently held in Vienna for the purpose of constituting an "Austrian Society for the History of Medicine." Professor Leopold Schoenbauer, M.D., was elected president of the new organization, whose board of directors is to include Prof. Niedermeier, M.D., Prof. Glaser, M.D., University Lecturer Rottmann, M.D., Dr. Berghoff, Dr. Wyclicky, Dr. Jantsch and Dr. Kline, General Secretary of the American Physicians' Club in Vienna.

**PROF. SCHOENBAUER HONORED BY INTERNATIONAL SURGEONS' GROUP.** Professor Leopold Schoenbauer, the famous Austrian surgeon and President of the Austrian Chapter of the International College of Surgeons, has been elected an honorary member of the College, which is the largest international association of surgeons.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A "FREUD MUSEUM" PLANNED.** May 6, 1956, will mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis. In celebration of the centenary of this famous Austrian physician, scientist and scholar, the International Psychoanalytical Association is planning to establish a Freud museum. The project provides for the purchase of the house in London where Freud spent the last year of his life and which still contains his library and his valuable collections. To this end, the Aus-

trian University Professors Dr. Poetzl, Dr. Hoff, Dr. Frankl and also Dr. Novotny, Dr. Winterstein and Dr. Buschbeck are calling on the public to honor the memory of this great scientist and physician — who carried the fame of Austrian science to the most distant lands — and to help realize the plans for the museum. Contributions can be sent to the account of the "Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung", Konto Nr. W-1771, Vienna.

**TWO MEDICAL EXHIBITIONS IN VIENNA.** An "International Pharmacists' Exhibition" is scheduled at the Kuenstlerhaus from May 6-13, 1956, in connection with the International Pharmacists' Congress to be held in Vienna. Ten days later, a special medical exhibition will be opened in the Vienna City Hall — where it will run from May 23 to May 26. The second exhibition is in honor of the Congress of Dermatologists. The arrangements for both exhibitions are being made by the Institute of Economic Development (Wirtschaftsfoerderungsinstitut), Severingasse 9, Vienna IX.

**"THERESIANUM" TO BE REACTIVATED.** The Austrian Federal Government recently decided to revive the "Theresianische Akademie," a school and educational institution rich in traditions and once famed far beyond the boundaries of Austria. The plans of the Ministry of Education in this connection provide for the establishment of a completely new secondary school of a special type, to function as an experimental school in which emphasis would be placed on languages, history, economic geography and ethnological studies, as well as on music and sports. In the language studies, special attention will be devoted to the teaching of Slavic, East European and oriental languages. Associated with the new secondary institution will be a boarding establishment for Austrian and foreign students of the Theresianum. Founded by Empress Maria Theresia in 1749, the Theresian Academy was unable to resume its activities in 1945 since all of its buildings were requisitioned by the Soviet occupation authorities. According to preliminary estimates, the sum of one million dollars will be necessary for the reactivation program. It is expected that the school will be able to start work in 1957.

**41ST SESSION OF SALZBURG SEMINAR IN AMERICAN STUDIES OPENED.** The "Salzburg Seminar in American Studies" recently began its 41st session. The Seminar, which is held in Leopoldskron Castle near Salzburg — the former Archiepiscopal Palace — is a private institution, originally organized in cooperation with the Students' Council of Harvard University in the U.S. The major themes of the 41st session are: "American Foreign Policy," "Writing and Publishing in American Society" and "The American Economy."

**SUMMER COURSES AT OBERGURGL ALPINE RESEARCH STATION.** From August 5 to Sept. 22, 1956, Innsbruck University's Alpine Research Station at Obergurgl (6,500 ft.) is offering international summer courses on the following subjects relating to the High Alps: Biology of the High Alps, Flora and Fauna of High mountain Areas, Geology of the Alps, Problems of Alpine Agriculture, Nature Studies and Education. The institution will also conduct courses in summer skiing, Alpine sports and glacier techniques.



## The Way to Victory at the Olympics: A HISTORY OF ALPINE SKIING IN AUSTRIA



*Arlberg – Center of Alpine Skiing*

**1,193 MOVIE THEATERS IN AUSTRIA.** At the present time Austria has a total of 1,193 movie houses. During 1955, these theaters showed a total of 472 different feature films. 1,135 of the houses handle films of standard width, while 12 are equipped for showing non-standard types and 46 are mobile facilities. Of the 17 movie theaters having more than 800 seats, 8 are in Vienna. 689 of them have seating capacities between 200 and 500. Of the total of 357 cinemas operating on a daily basis, 182 are in Vienna. 98 houses are equipped for Cinemascope, most of them with separate controls for image and sound.

**FILM NEWS.** A comedy entitled "Bademeister Spargel" is currently being produced by the Zenith-Sonor Film Company at the Vienna-Schoenbrunn studios. Based on a script by Frank Filip and directed by Alfred Lehner, the picture will feature the first joint appearance of Paul Hoerbiger and his youngest son Herbert. The other starring roles will be played by Angelika Hauff, Beppo Brehm and Franziska Kinz.

The Neusser-Kosmos production "Symphony in Gold" is now being filmed at the Rosenhugel studios in Vienna under the direction of Franz Antel. The featured roles in this picture, written by Forster and Nachman with music by Lothar Olias, will be taken by Margit Saad, Joachim Fuchsberger, Hannelore Bollmann, Susi Nicoletti, Hans Moser,

The Austrian Alps, with their snow-covered winters lasting at least 4 months and their incomparably beautiful and numerous slopes – all accessible by cable cars and ski lifts – fulfil to a unique degree the ideal prerequisites for Alpine skiing. Moreover, thanks to his natural talents, the Austrian seems positively predestined for this type of sport, which requires an acute sense of motion, quick reactions, buoyancy and rhythm. In spite of all these natural endowments and advantages, however, decades of painstaking work and planning were necessary for Austria to gain the preeminence in competitive international Alpine skiing which she now enjoys.

Austrian skiing made its first important showing at the end of the Twenties, when Alpine ski racing entered a new stage following the invention of steel edges for skis. This was the brief but glorious period during which the Innsbruck skiers Lantschner, Leubner, Reindl and Salcher – known as the "Red Devils" – dominated Alpine skiing competitions in Central Europe. Then came a period of successes for Switzerland, during which time the only Austrians to assert themselves were the world champions Zingerle and Toni Seelos, the latter one of Austria's most successful skiers and many years ahead of his time in slalom racing techniques. Austrian skiers did not participate in the 1936 Winter Olympics at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany, but at the "FIS" (Federation Internationale Des Ski) races at Innsbruck in 1936, the first places in the slalom races went to the Austrians Rudi Matt and Gerda Paumgarten. At the 1933-Innsbruck-FIS-race Inge Lantschner and Toni Seelos

Ernst Waldbrunn and Thomas Hoerbiger. Another attraction of the film will be the use of the entire Vienna Ice Review.

The film on the subject of Mayerling, currently being prepared at the Vienna-Sievering studios by Sascha Productions, follows a script by Fentsch-Wery, for which Schmidt-Gentner has composed the music. Rudolf Prack, Christiane Hoerbiger-Wessely, Attila Hoerbiger, Paul Hoerbiger, Lil Dagover, Winnie Markus, Adrienne Gessner, Grete Zimmer and Eric Frey are cast in the film.

Zelnik Film Productions recently began shooting the comedy "Die Elfe in der Raumrakete" on location in the Alland region of Lower Austria. The leading role in this film – the story of which takes place in Texas and deals with the adventures of a lively cowgirl and her meeting with Indians – will be taken by Lisl Heiner, the dancer and pantomimist.

Filming of the indoor scenes of Cosmopol-Film's "Ein Herz und eine Seele" was recently begun at the Vienna Calvarienberg studios. Based on a script by Louis Agotay and Franz Gribitz, this picture will be directed by Max Nosseck and features the following stars: Hans Moser, Wolf Albach-Retty, Johannes Heesters, Paul Hoerbiger, Theo Lingen, Guenther Philipp, Waltraut Haas, Susi Nicoletti, Grete Weiser, Rudolf Lenz, Ernie Mangold, Rudolf Carl, Heinz Conrads, Lotte Lang, Fritz Imhoff, Ernst Waldbrunn, Hans Thimig, Franz Boenheim and Richard Eybner.

had won world titles. Successive years brought world championship titles in downhill and slalom racing to the Austrians Jennewein, Pfeiffer and Lantschner and, in 1939, for the first time, the world title in ski jumping went to Sepp Bradl of Salzburg who, 15 years later, ranked 10th in the world championships but was still the best jumper in Central Europe.

#### St. Moritz — Aspen — Oslo — Cortina

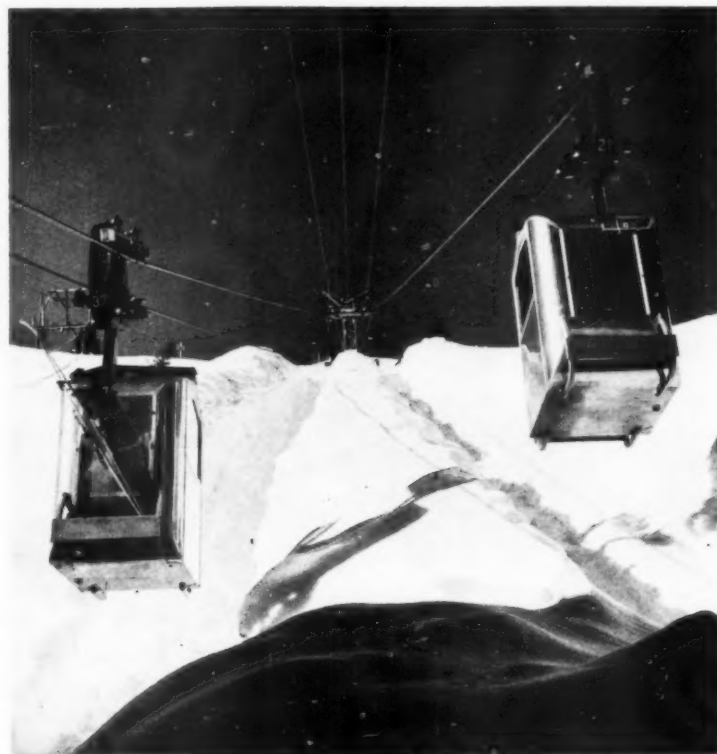
The war resulted in a serious interruption of Austrian skiing, which after 1945 had to be reorganized very laboriously from practically nothing. Deprived for many years of international contacts, poorly fed and badly equipped, Austrian skiers participated in the 1948 Winter Olympics at St. Moritz and one of their number, Trude Beiser, won a gold medal in the Alpine combination — the first Olympic gold medal ever to be awarded to an Austrian skier. Trude Beiser also won a silver medal in downhill racing. Ricki Mahringer won bronze medals in the Alpine combination and the special slalom. Resi Hammerer won a bronze medal in downhill racing. Among the men, Franz Gabl won a silver medal in downhill racing. Two years later, at the world championship contests in Aspen, the Austrians made their first breakthrough toward top place. Trude Beiser (1) and Dagmar Roin (2) won three of the world championships awarded, Ricki Mahringer won two silver medals and Trude Beiser won an additional second place. Although the men, except for one third place (won by Egon Schoepf), were far less successful than the women, Austria's skier's were the over-all winners in the 1950 World Championships.

The lagging of the male skiers behind the women resulted in the reconstitution of the men's team and in a change in methods and training. Although great emphasis was placed on the skier's individuality, the basic trend was toward educating the younger generation of skiers in a spirit of teamwork. Not even the most successful skiers were allowed to become stars, since the star systems destroys the structure of the team; nor were they allowed to neglect their professions and home surroundings, all glory notwithstanding. Since this time, the training of the National Team involves 10 days of summer and 16 days of winter Team-training.

By the time of the 1952 Winter Olympics, the men's team achieved a deserved and noteworthy success in the form of one gold medal as well as two silver and two bronze ones over and above the gold and silver medals won by the women. Despite the departure of many medalists — mainly to the U.S. — 1953 was characterized by further successes of the new generation, and the "FIS" World Championships of 1954 brought gold medals for both the men's and the women's teams, with Austria's skiers taking first place in the listing by nations. 1955 was marked by preparations for the 1956 Winter Olympics and by unparalleled victories of the Austrian men's and women's teams in all international competitions except the Lauberhorn race.

#### The History of Skiing in Austria

Scientific research from various sources has demonstrated beyond all doubt that the history of skiing in the



*Cable Cars at Bad Gastein*

snow-covered parts of Northern Europe and Asia goes back 5000-6000 years. The history of skiing in the Alpine regions of Central Europe, however, is relatively young — a development which, on the average, is only about 70 years old.

The only precursor of modern skiing in the Central European Alps — yet unconnected with it — is the book by J.W. Valvasor entitled "The Honor of the Duchy of Carniolia," which appeared in Laibach (then Austria, now Yugoslavia) in 1689. The book reports that at that period "the peasants in the mountains of Slavonia made daily use of of wooden planks, about 5 feet long, tapered in front and bent upwards, for the purpose of crossing the snow-covered hills." It has been shown that skiing in this part of Slavonia goes back to the 13th century but that this type of skiing has no connection with that now used in the Central European Alps, the latter having originated some two centuries later than the 1689 date and being based on Scandinavian experience.

The first date in this connection is the year 1885, when Victor Heger of Freudenthal (then Austria, now Czechoslovakia) had a pair of good ash skis sent from Christiana (now Oslo) in Norway. Two years later, Count Harrach of the same region equipped his entire hunting personnel with skis from Norway. In 1891, the master joiner Franz Baudisch established the first Central European ski factory in Jungbuck (then Austria, now Czechoslovakia). In a comprehensive price list, in which he included complete instructions for using this new sporting device, Baudisch recommended "tallow, moist salt or dried herrings for waxing the skis."



### First Skis Here 8 ft. Long

In 1885, the first skis from Norway also reached Vorarlberg, Austria's westernmost province. These skis were nearly 8 ft. long. There is, however, no evidence that Victor Sohm, one of the first Vorarlberg skiers, encouraged the new sport in the United States during his stay there from 1887 to 1889. After his return to Europe Sohm continued his skiing activities in Austria and won the first prize in ski jumping at the first ski competition in Switzerland, held at Glarus. The Vorarlberg skiers very soon discovered the unique advantages of the Arlberg region, which developed into a ski center as early as 1900.

The first lecture on skiing in Austria, delivered to an audience of about 50 persons by a Swedish engineer, was held in Hallein, near Salzburg, in the year 1888. No more than 6 years later, the Wilhelm Arlt of Salzburg made the first ski tour to the high Alpine regions, reaching the Hohe Sonnblick peak (10,200 ft.) by ski on February 5, 1894, and descending to the village of Kolm-Saigurn (5,250 ft.) within 32 minutes.

It is no longer possible to determine when ski enthusiasts began to engage in their sport in Vienna, but the "First Vienna Ski Association" was already functioning in 1891. This organization had two first-rate instructors from Scandinavia at its disposal: Baron Wedl, who was active at the Swedish Embassy in Vienna, and the Norwegian Samson, who worked as a baker in Vienna. It is therefore not surprising that as early as 1896 the First International Ski Competition was held in Vienna. Numerous skiers from Scandinavia were invited to the city for the event and immediately after its conclusion over 500 pairs of skis were sold.

### 1894 - First Wintersports Exhibition

Skiing in Styria, which was also based on Scandinavian techniques, started about the same time and, until the turn of the century, this province was unquestionably the leading ski center of Austria. In 1892, pioneer Styrian skiers climbed the "Stuhleck" (5,850 ft.); in 1893, the "Association of Styrian Skiers" was founded in Muerzzuschlag and, in the same year, the province's first ski race was held - likewise in Muerzzuschlag. This race featured the participation of women skiers and a 10-ft. jump by the Norwegian Samson. At the next ski event in the same city, in the year 1894, there were jumps of up to 65 ft. Muerzzuschlag was also the scene of the first European Winter Sports Exhibition - held in 1894. It was in this little Styrian town of Muerzzuschlag that the foundation was laid for the great development of skiing in Austria and its importance in the history of this sports has been recognized in its selection as the site for the Austrian Winter Sports Museum.

In 1891, Wilhelm von Wangenheim, an Austrian baron, published the first textbook on skiing in the German language, under the title "The Norwegian Snowshoe (Ski)." Two years later, E.H. Schollmeyer of Klagenfurt published an excellent book on skiing in Austria, entitled "On Snowshoes: a Handbook for Foresters, Hunters and Tourists."

At this time, the command of the Austrian Army began to show interest in skiing and as early as 1893 the first ski

patrols were organized as part of the army. It was for these units that Lt. Raymund Udy, in 1894, issued the first European textbook on military skiing. No branch of skiing had more influence on the development of the sport than did military skiing. Col. Georg Bilgri himself fully trained over 45,000 skiers in more than 1,000 military ski courses, thereby becoming not only one of the most popular pioneers of skiing in Austria but also one of the founders of Alpine skiing.



*Toni Sailer in Action*

### Also Ski-Jumping-Contests for Women

The beginnings of skiing in Tyrol go back to the same period as for the other provinces and in 1907, the first Austrian ski championships took place in the Tyrolean village of Kitzbuehl, this event also including a jumping contest for women. Since the women ski jumpers of that period did not yet wear ski pants but only normal skirts, Countess Paula Lamberg, the winner in the jumping contest, was given the nickname of "the floating Countess." The first printed skiing guide for Tyrol appeared in 1906. This was the first specialized book of its kind in Central Europe. In 1900, Tyrolean skiers made the first winter ski climb of the Gross Venediger peak (12,000 ft.).

The pioneer skiers in the Arlberg area were the priests of the local villages who, around 1890, started to use skis for winter visits to their parishioners. In 1905 the first ski courses in the Arlberg were organized under the direction of Viktor Sohm, whose most diligent and gifted pupil was Hannes Scheider. At the age of 17 Schneider was already a ski instructor in the Arlberg and shortly thereafter he founded the "Arlberg School of Skiing" which, more than any other such school, has contributed toward carrying the fame of Austria's skiing and the unique beauty of her snowy landscapes literally around the world. Hannes Schneider was

unquestionably the most popular pioneer of Austrian skiing and of the "Arlberg School of Skiing" in the United States, where he died in 1955 after his many years of dedication to this sport.

#### The Austrian Ski Training Program

The basic idea behind the Austrian ski training program is to prepare as extensive a pool of young skiers as possible, since this is the only method offering some guarantee for the development of successful top-rankers. This conscious preparation of the younger generation begins with school children of 8 who are interested in skiing. They are given instruction in the basic techniques of skiing until they are 13 years old, without being permitted to participate in competitions. At least once during the winter season, every village in the Austrian Alpine provinces holds a "Local Young People's Ski Day," at which the school children enthusiastically take part in skiing events. For the 14-18 age group, however, there are regular youth championships, such as the "Regional Young People's Ski Championships" and the "Provincial Youth Championships," where the winners on the various local levels are determined. The latter then compete for the title of Austrian "Junior Ski Champion."

Instruction in Alpine skiing is mainly in the hands of instructors who pass a State examination. The prerequisites for admission to the State examination are two years of experience as an assistant ski instructor, several months of theoretical study at the Physical Training Institute in Innsbruck and a practical course of several months on the Arlberg. Only after completion of these requirements is the candidate admitted to the State examination, in which he must prove his practical and theoretical knowledge.

Austria was the first country to organize an international congress on ski instruction, an event which took place on the Arlberg in 1951 and achieved extremely good results.

Of course, Austria is a member of the "International Ski Federation" (FIS) from the time of its inception in 1924. The Austrian Ski Association is represented in the governing board of this organization which numbers 38 member nations and pursues the goal of popularizing skiing. The international competitions of the FIS, at which world championship titles are awarded, are exceeded in importance only by those of the Winter Olympics. The 1958 world skiing championships being organized by the FIS will be held at the internationally famous winter sports center of Bad Gastein. This will be the first time since the end of World War Two that Austria has been the scene of FIS world championship competitions. Two of the most successful and exciting FIS world championship events were its races in Innsbruck in 1933 and 1936.

Austria's ski teachers have from the very start been active far beyond the boundaries of Austria. No engagement abroad was ever turned down by a ski trainer or teacher and the successful methods of Austrian skiers were never held secretively from other nations. As early as at the turn of the century, the Vorarlberg skiing pioneer, Albert Bildstein, was appointed a ski instructor in Turkey, where he was awarded the honorary title of "Pasha" in recognition of his achievements. After 1930, numerous top-ranking skiers and ski instructors went abroad every year and established successful schools of Austrian skiing techniques which are still in existence, among others those in France, Italy, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Australia, Japan and the United States.

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